



WEBSITE PROPOSALS • COMPARISON WORKSHEET • 2026 EDITION

Three Quotes, One Decision.

You have three prices on the desk. They are not three prices for the same thing. Here is how to find out what each one is really selling, and what it will cost you in year two.



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EDITION

Nimbus Media
September 2026

TIME TO COMPLETE

About 40 minutes,
proposals open

LIVE FORM FIELDS

62 fields.
Type, save, send.

How to read this.

Every blank on this worksheet is a live form field. Type into them in any PDF reader, save the file, and your answers stay in it.

Put all three proposals in front of you

The worksheet asks the same question of each firm. Its value is not in any one answer. It is in the gaps between them, and you cannot see a gap with only one document open.

Write what the document says, not what you were told

If a promise was made on a call and is not in the proposal, write "not in document". That will be the most useful thing you write today. It is also the thing you will forget by Friday.

A blank is a finding, not a failure

Where a proposal answers nothing, leave the box empty and let the gap show. Page nine turns those gaps into an email you can send in about two minutes.

The order here is deliberate

Ownership comes first because it is the only thing on the list you cannot renegotiate later. Everything else can be fixed with money or a conversation. Whose name is on the domain account cannot.

Do it before you shortlist, not after

Most owners narrow to one firm and then start asking the awkward questions. By then you have picked a side and every answer sounds reasonable. Ask all three at once, while you still have nothing invested in any of them.

YOU WILL NOT NEED A DEVELOPER

Every question on this worksheet can be answered by reading the proposal you already have, and every one of them can be sent back in an email. Nothing here requires you to understand how a website is built.

If a firm tells you that a question on page six or page eight is too technical to answer simply, that is itself an answer. Write down what they said, in their words, in the box.

One more thing before you start. Page ten is where we tell you which of these questions Nimbus answers worse than the other two firms will. It is there because a comparison sheet written by a bidder is worth nothing unless you can use it to rule the bidder out.

The one number that tells you nothing.

Four thousand dollars and sixty thousand dollars can buy the same website. They can also buy things so unlike that putting them in one column is a category error. The price does not tell you which of those you are looking at.



A price is an answer. Nobody gave you the question.

Three firms quoted after three separate conversations. Each heard a different version of what you wanted, wrote down a different scope, and priced that. The numbers are not far apart because the firms disagree about value. They are far apart because they are describing different work.

So stop reading them as prices. Read them as descriptions, and read the four things below that every one of them decides on your behalf whether it mentions them or not.

15x

SPREAD ON DESK

0 of 3

ASK WHO OWNS IT

4

LINES THAT DIFFER

24 mo

WHERE IT SETTLES

WHAT THE RANKING GUIDES LEAVE OUT

We read the three guides ranking highest for how much a website costs. Forbes Advisor, Wix and One Little Web all price the parts carefully. None of the three tells you to ask who owns the domain, who owns the design files, or what a move away would cost.

None of them gives you a single question to send back. They answer how much. They do not answer what for.
Checked 3 September 2026.

The cost lines you can check.

Part of every quote is a number the firm invented. Part of it is a number anyone can look up in ninety seconds. Separate the two before you do anything else, because padding hides in the half you assumed was fixed.

LINE	WHAT IT IS	PUBLISHED PRICE
Webflow site plan, Basic	Static pages, 10 GB a month	\$15 / mo
Webflow site plan, Premium	Up to 20,000 CMS items, 2.5 TB	\$25 / mo
Webflow Workspace, Core	One full seat, extras \$39 / mo	\$19 / mo
Kinsta, one WordPress site	Managed hosting, billed annually	\$30 / mo
WP Engine Essential, from	First year, new customers only	\$28 / mo
WP Rocket, single licence	Caching plugin, renews yearly	\$59.95 / yr
Gravity Forms, Basic	Form plugin, renews yearly	\$59 / yr
.com domain, wholesale	Registry fee, \$10.97 from 1 Nov	\$10.26 / yr

Every figure above was read off the vendor's own pricing page on 3 September 2026. Billed yearly where a yearly price exists. Now write your three numbers in, and keep the two columns apart.

Fill these in

QUOTE A

QUOTE B

QUOTE C

Build price quoted

The one-off number on page one

Recurring, per month

Everything you pay after launch

THE LINE WORTH LOOKING AT TWICE

The registry charges \$10.26 a year for a .com. Cloudflare Registrar sells at that price with no markup at all. So if a proposal bills domain management at twenty five dollars a month, you are not buying a domain. You are renting somebody else's name on the account that holds it.

That is not automatically wrong. Plenty of owners are happy to pay for someone to remember the renewal. But you should know which of the two you are buying, and the proposal should say.

The four lines that actually differ.

Take out everything the three proposals agree on and four things are left standing. Each one is settled before you sign. Three of them stay invisible until the day you try to leave.

01 What you own

The domain, the design source files, the platform account, the copy and the photography.

Ownership is not a service line. It is a fact about whose name sits on an account, and it is decided the morning that account is opened, not at the end of the project.

02 What year two costs

A build is a number you pay once. A website is a number you pay for as long as it brings you work.

Ask each firm what the same relationship costs in the twelve months after launch if you commission nothing new. Then ask what it costs if you cancel.

03 Who does the work

The person in the meeting is often not the person who builds the site.

Ask for the name of the designer and the name of the developer. Ask which parts are subcontracted and where. Neither question is rude and both are routine in every other trade.

04 What leaving costs

Every platform has an exit and they are not remotely equal.

One hands you a working site. One hands you a folder of static files with the working parts removed. One hands you nothing, because it cannot.

THE EXIT IS A PLATFORM DECISION, NOT A CONTRACT CLAUSE

Webflow publishes what its own code export leaves behind: CMS content and Collection lists, user accounts, ecommerce, page password protection, form submission processing, site search, localised content and code components. Export also needs a paid Workspace plan, not just a site plan.

Wix is blunter. Its help centre says a Wix site must run on Wix servers, because the architecture does not support external hosting. Read the platform documentation before you read the contract. The contract cannot give you what the platform will not release.

Worksheet one: what you own.

One row per question, one column per firm. Write what the proposal says. Where it says nothing, write nothing, and let the empty box stand as the finding.

NAME EACH FIRM	QUOTE A	QUOTE B	QUOTE C
Registrant on the domain Whose legal name after launch			
Registrar login held by Who can move the domain			
Design source files Who owns them, in what format			
Platform or hosting account In whose name is it opened			
Copy and photography Who owns it, and any licence limits			
Transferred at final payment The exact list, from the document			
Written in the proposal Yes, no, or which page			

THE ROW THAT DOES THE MOST WORK

Line one. If the domain is registered in the firm's name and has to be moved to yours later, ICANN's Transfer Policy requires the registrar to lock it against transfer to another registrar for 60 days after a change of registrant, although a registrar may let you opt out before the change is made. Transfers are also refused within 60 days of the registration date.

So a domain put in the wrong name on day one can cost you two months at exactly the point you are trying to leave. Get line one right at the start and none of that ever applies to you. Policy as updated 21 February 2024, which registrars had to implement by 21 August 2025.

Year two is the real price.

The build is the number you argue about. The year after it is the number you live with. Two quotes that look fifteen thousand dollars apart in March can be level by the following summer.



There is a single piece of arithmetic that settles this, and you can do it on the back of the proposal.

Months to parity = difference in build price ÷ difference in monthly price

ILLUSTRATION	BUILD	RECURRING	PAID BY MONTH 24
Quote A	\$4,000	\$600 / mo	\$18,400
Quote B	\$18,000	\$25 / mo	\$18,600
Quote C	\$60,000	\$1,200 / mo	\$88,800

Quote A and Quote B are fourteen thousand dollars apart on the day you sign and two hundred dollars apart two years later. The cheap one was not cheap. It was financed. Quote C stays expensive, which is fine, so long as you knew that going in.

WHOSE CARD IS THE PLATFORM ON

A recurring line billed through the firm is not the same as a recurring line billed to you, even when the number matches. Webflow charges \$19 a month billed yearly for a Workspace with one full seat and \$39 a month for every additional full seat, and a site plan sits on whichever account opened it.

So when a proposal says we handle the platform, ask which account and whose card. It costs nothing to ask now, and it is the difference between changing firms in an afternoon and changing firms in a fortnight.

Year two, the work, the exit.

Same three firms, same rule. Copy the figure or the sentence out of the document. If you have to ask for it, that belongs in the email on the next page.

NAME EACH FIRM	QUOTE A	QUOTE B	QUOTE C
Total cost, months 1 to 12 After launch, no new work commissioned			
What the recurring fee covers The list, not the word support			
Platform and licence fees Billed to you, or billed through them			
Minimum term and notice In months			
Designer, by name The person, not the firm			
Developer, by name And whether it is subcontracted			
Rate outside the scope Hourly or daily			
What you get on the way out Files, database, export, or nothing			

IF A BOX STAYS EMPTY, THAT IS THE FINDING

The last row is the one firms answer most vaguely and it is the one that decides what the whole purchase is worth in three years. A working copy of the site, a database, a static export and nothing are four different answers, and only one of them leaves you free.

Whatever is missing here goes straight into the email on the next page. You do not have to argue with anyone. You just have to ask all three the same thing on the same day and read what comes back.

The email to send all three.

Send the same message to every firm, including the one you have quietly already chosen. The answers are useful. So is how long each of them takes to write back.

COPY FROM HERE

Thanks for the proposal. Before I compare the three I have, I am asking all of you the same seven questions. Short answers are fine.

1. On the day the site launches, whose name is on the domain registration, and whose name is on the hosting or platform account?
2. If we part company, what do I receive: the design source files, the content, a working copy of the site, or a static export?
3. What will I pay in total across the twelve months after launch if I commission no new work?
4. Which platform, hosting and licence fees are billed to me directly, and which are billed through you?
5. Who designs the site and who builds it? If either is subcontracted, please say so and say where.
6. What is the notice period, and is there a minimum term?
7. What is your rate for work outside this scope?

I am not looking for the lowest number. I am looking for the clearest answer.

READ THE REPLY, THEN READ HOW IT ARRIVED

Whether a firm answers question one in a plain sentence tells you more than the answer does. Ownership is not a complicated subject. A firm that will not put it in an email will not put it in a contract either.

Watch for three tells. An answer that arrives by phone when you asked in writing. A promise to sort it out at the end. And the word standard used where a number belongs.

Send it to all three on the same morning and give them the same deadline. You are not being difficult. You are running the only fair test available to you, and the firm that is pleased to answer is telling you something too.

Where we would lose this.

We are Nimbus Media. We build Webflow sites in Houston and run search and paid ads. So a worksheet written by us is worth nothing to you unless you can use it to rule us out. Here is how you would.



Four of the questions on the last four pages have answers we do not enjoy giving. We would rather you read them here than find them in month nine.

WHERE WE HOLD UP

- Ownership. The domain and every account go in your name from day one, and we put that in the proposal rather than the invoice.
- Year two is a published site plan you can look up, not a retainer written so you cannot price it.
- You meet the people who do the work, because there are not many of us to meet.

WHERE WE LOSE

- What you can carry away if you leave. This is the big one and it has the whole of the next page.
- How much of the site you can change on your own, without calling anyone here.
- Platform choice, because we build on one platform and only one.

WHY THIS PAGE IS IN HERE

A comparison sheet that always picks the firm who wrote it is not a comparison sheet. It is a brochure with boxes on it, and you would have spotted that by page four.

So the next page lists the five questions on this worksheet that a Nimbus proposal answers worse than one of your other two firms will. Read them with our quote in your hand.

None of the five is a confession. Every firm has questions it answers badly, and the ones that pretend otherwise are the ones to watch. What you are testing is whether a firm will tell you where it is weak before you have paid it anything.

The questions we answer badly.

Five honest answers, in the order they should worry you. If two or more of these describe your situation, one of the other two quotes is the better buy and you should take it.

What do I get if I leave?

Webflow's own help centre says a code export excludes CMS content and Collection lists, user accounts, ecommerce, password protection, form handling, site search, localised content and code components, and that exporting needs a paid Workspace plan. So what you would carry away from a site we built is the design as static files, not a working site. A WordPress build hands you a database and a folder that will run on any host. We lose this one outright, and it is the most important question on the worksheet.

Can I make real changes without you?

Editing words and swapping pictures is easy. Building a genuinely new kind of page is not, and it needs the Designer. A WordPress site with a page builder, or a hosted platform like Squarespace, leaves a non-technical owner far more room to work alone. If independence matters to you more than craft does, do not hire us.

Is Webflow the right platform, or the one you sell?

We only build on Webflow. Treat that as the bias it is. If you need heavy membership logic, a complicated store, a library of plugins your team already depends on, or you have to self-host, then another firm is the better buy and we would tell you so on the call.

Who does the work, and what if they go?

We are small. A named person does the design and a named person does the build. A forty-person firm answers this better than we can, because they have people sitting on the bench. If your launch date cannot survive one person being unavailable, pay for the bigger firm.

Are you the cheapest?

No. On a genuinely simple site with no CMS behind it, a good template on a hosted platform costs a fraction of what we charge and will serve you for years. In that case the four thousand dollar quote is not a trap. It is the right answer, and the expensive quotes are selling you capacity you will never use.

TICK ANYTHING THAT IS TRUE OF YOU

- ☐ I need to be able to rebuild pages myself, without calling anyone.
- ☐ I must be able to take a working site with me if I change firms.
- ☐ My site depends on plugins or a store my team already runs.
- ☐ The launch date cannot slip if one person is unavailable.
- ☐ The site is five pages and will stay five pages.

Two or more ticks and you should buy from somebody else. We would rather you knew that now.

A second opinion on a quote you hold.

Send us one of the three. We will read it against this worksheet and write back on what it covers, what it leaves out, and whether one of the others is the better buy. If the answer is that you should hire somebody else, we will say so plainly.

What you send

One proposal as a PDF, and the headline numbers from the other two if you have them. No call, no form, no discovery session.

What it costs

Nothing, and there is no obligation to speak to anyone here afterwards.

What comes back

A written read-out inside two working days, covering ownership, year two, who does the work and the exit, in that order.

What we will not do

Quote against it unless you ask. If you want a price from us, ask for one separately and we will treat it as a separate thing.

FREE SECOND OPINION ON A QUOTE YOU ALREADY HOLD

Email the proposal to team@nimbusmedia.io with "second opinion" in the subject line. We will tell you if one of the others is the better buy.

team@nimbusmedia.io

nimbusmedia.io



nimbusmedia.io/resources